

# Questions and Answers About Sheep and Goats and the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

## **Q. How is a Premises Identification Number (PIN) assigned under the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)?**

**A.** Under the NAIS, a premises is defined as a location where animals are raised, held, or boarded. The NAIS PIN is assigned to the physical location where animals are housed. Animals and individual animal numbers are then associated with this location during the timeframes that the animals reside there.

## **Q. How is a scrapie PIN, or flock ID, assigned under the National Scrapie Eradication Program?**

**A.** A scrapie PIN is assigned to an epidemiologic unit of animals. Scrapie PINs are often referred to as flock IDs by producers and are currently printed on official scrapie program eartags. Unlike the NAIS PIN, the scrapie PIN—or flock ID—does not necessarily tie directly to a single location. It is assigned based on whether a group of sheep or goats is managed as a distinct unit with respect to scrapie risk or to facilitate program management. Animals assigned to one flock ID could be housed at three or four geographically distinct premises.

The flock ID is linked to another number in the Scrapie National Generic Database (SNGD) that represents the actual location of the flock. Currently, this SNGD “location number” is not the same as the NAIS PIN.

## **Q. If I have a National Scrapie Eradication Program flock ID, do I also need to have a NAIS PIN to receive NAIS-compliant sheep and goat eartags?**

**A.** Yes. The flock ID is assigned to an epidemiologic unit of animals. The NAIS PIN is assigned to a physical location where the animals are housed. If you manage sheep or goats, you should have at least one flock ID and one NAIS PIN.

If you already have a flock ID but do not have a NAIS PIN, check with your State animal identification coordinator to find out whether you need to submit additional information to obtain a NAIS PIN. The State may be able to use your scrapie program information to assign a NAIS PIN to you automatically. A full list of State contacts for NAIS is available at <http://www.usda.gov/nais> under the “Contact Your State or Tribe” box.

## **Q. How will the NAIS PIN correspond with my flock ID (scrapie PIN)?**

**A.** The NAIS PIN will always remain tied to a specific location. The flock ID will remain tied to an epidemiologic unit of animals. So, when a flock moves as a unit to a new location, the flock ID may remain the same and can be associated with a new NAIS PIN.

In nearly all States right now, the scrapie database does not automatically link to any information collected through the NAIS. However, NAIS PINs can be manually entered into the scrapie database to reflect a flock’s location. In addition, the scrapie program flock ID may be entered into a NAIS database as a secondary identifier to help animal health officials trace infected or exposed animals in the event of a disease detection. At some point, these databases will be linked so that the basic premises information will need to be entered only once.

## **Q. How can I get a NAIS PIN?**

**A.** Each State is responsible for registering premises and assigning them nationally unique NAIS PINs. Although all States should be capable of registering premises by mid-2005, current stages of implementation vary among States. Contact your State department of agriculture or your State Veterinarian for more information about how to get a NAIS PIN and to find out when this service will be available to you. A full list of State contacts is available at <http://www.usda.gov/nais> under the “Contact Your State or Tribe” box.

For those producers who already have a flock ID, APHIS and State officials may be able to use information stored in the scrapie database to assign your premises a NAIS PIN. You should contact your State to find out for sure.

If you have registered your premises for a NAIS PIN but do not have a flock ID for your sheep or goats, please call 1-866-USDA-TAG. Request a flock ID (scrapie PIN) and provide your NAIS PIN over the phone.

**Q. What type of animal identification will be used with sheep and goats in the NAIS? Will it be the same identification that is being used for the National Scrapie Eradication Program?**

**A.** Sheep and goat working groups are drafting proposed NAIS identification standards for each species. Currently, they suggest that these animals continue to be identified as they are under scrapie program. APHIS will continue providing official scrapie eartags.

In the future, scrapie eartags provided by USDA will be compliant with NAIS standards. Right now, the NAIS is a voluntary program, but visual identification used in the program must meet the following requirements:

- The tag must bear the entire 15-digit Animal Identification Number (AIN).
- The tag must be designed for one-time use (tamper evident).
- The tag may not be readily altered or otherwise tampered with.
- The national identification number must be easily and reliably readable.
- The tag must be imprinted with the U.S. shield.

By the end of summer 2005, APHIS anticipates that companies producing scrapie-approved tags that are also NAIS-compliant will become NAIS AIN Tag Managers.

**Q. How do I order scrapie program eartags that are compliant with NAIS standards?**

**A.** You can order sheep and goat eartags provided by USDA by calling 1-866-USDA-TAG. By the end of 2006, official sheep and goat tags compliant with NAIS visual standards will be provided by USDA.

If you would prefer to purchase a different kind of tag, you can contact a USDA-approved tag company. A full list of approved scrapie tag companies is available at

<<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie/approved-tag-co.html>>. Some of these companies are currently providing radio frequency identification (RFID) tags.

A list of USDA-approved AIN Tag Managers will be posted on the NAIS Web site at <<http://www.usda.gov/naais>>. The information will be available through the "Animal Identification" link under the "Browse by Subject" box.

**Q. In the future, will I need to replace eartags that I acquired through the National Scrapie Eradication Program that are not fully compliant with NAIS standards?**

**A.** Scrapie program eartags acquired by producers before the transition to NAIS will remain valid for the identification of sheep and goats.

**Q. Can you provide examples of a NAIS PIN, a flock ID, a scrapie serial number, and an individual AIN?**

**A.** A NAIS PIN is a nationally unique number. USDA will assign one permanent number to each premises (location) involved in animal agriculture through State and Tribal premises registration systems. Each NAIS PIN contains seven alphanumeric characters.

NAIS PIN Example: A123R69

A flock ID, or scrapie PIN, is a nationally unique number assigned by the State or local USDA Veterinary Services area office. Most are alphanumeric and include the State postal abbreviation followed by a number.

Scrapie PIN Example: TX30451

An AIN is a nationally unique number. As the NAIS begins to come online, USDA will allocate AINs to approved Tag Manufacturers, who will then produce AIN Tags. The format for the AIN is 15 numeric characters, the first three reflecting the internationally recognized country code for the United States (840). The last 12 digits are a randomly assigned, unique number sequence.

AIN Example: 840123456789012.

A scrapie individual number is a nationally unique number. It can be either a serial number comprised of the State postal abbreviation followed by, on metal tags, two letters and four numbers or, on plastic tags, one letter and 5 numbers. Or, it can be a combination of the flock ID (scrapie PIN), plus a production number unique to that premises.

Scrapie serial metal: TXAA0001

Scrapie serial plastic: TXA10004

Scrapie premises-based individual number: TX30451 1978

**Q. Where can I get more information about the National Scrapie Eradication Program?**

**A.** You can find more information online at <<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie>>. In addition, you may contact the APHIS Veterinary Services office for your State. A full list of USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services area offices is available at <[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/area\\_offices.htm](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/area_offices.htm)>.

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